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Canadian Human Rights Commission Tables its 2002 Annual Report

OTTAWA - March 31, 2003 - The Canadian Human Rights Commission's Annual Report, tabled today in the House of Commons, notes several key issues that were the focus of its work over the reporting period.

In the latter half of 2002, the Commission embarked on a process of change, aimed at updating all aspects of its work.

For example, the Commission will be increasing its use of alternative dispute resolution and is developing a new business model to process complaints more efficiently. In addition, the Commission will be using policy inquiries, special reports and other tools outside the complaints process to better address systemic and pressing issues.

In 2002, the Commission addressed a series of significant human rights issues including participating in the five-year review of the Employment Equity Act, focussing on one section of the federal government's proposed First Nations Governance Act, reporting on the situation of the Innu of Labrador, and revising its policy on drug and alcohol testing policy to reflect recent court decisions.

It also witnessed a significant increase in the number of disability-related complaints over 2002 — 85% more than the previous year. In the reporting period, the Commission increased the number of final decisions in human rights complaints it issued by 7.5%. The final decisions include 240 cases settled by the parties using ADRS methods.

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